



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

MONMOUTH, IL

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JANUARY

**Gathered by God, We Live Our Faith With:
Compassion, Grace, Gratitude, and Joy.**

Our Church—This Week :: February 9, 2026

Our Staff

Pastor Jamie Gallagher

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Musicians: Janice Algren

Carolyn Kellert

Preschool and Day Care Director

Bobbi Nees

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Congregation Council

Pam Van Kirk

Chip Algren

Pam Best

Adam Sanberg

Kurt Volz

Dee Dee Yez

(Officers will be elected at the February 10th meeting)

Dear Friends and Family,

Happy Valentines Day, friends. At the end of this week, we celebrate our loves with those closest to us—our significant others, our children/grandchildren/and all family, and our deepest and dearest friends. Do you celebrate with special treats? A date night out? A movie night in? A special dinner? Greeting cards? So many ways to just let someone in your life know how special they are. My mother-in-law has a card sending tradition for all holidays, Valentines Day included, and she always has great joy filling each card with themed confetti. Which makes opening each card a surprise when we inevitably forget that just ripping it open and flinging the card open means confetti goes everywhere. But it is how she shows her love to all her kids and grandkids. I hope you have a special way you celebrate this week's holiday.

I will be traveling for part of this week to Nebraska to visit my love and to spend a couple days with her. So for Wednesday to Saturday, the office will be closed. I will be available by phone, text, and email. If you need something from the church office during those days, please let me know and I will help you get access to what you need.

This next Sunday is the Transfiguration of our Lord, it is the final Sunday of the Season of Epiphany and we will transition to Lent beginning with Ash Wednesday on February 18th. Check the next page for information related to our Lent schedule of events.

Sunday Schedule

9:30 AM Coffee

10:00 AM Worship

Sunday School

January 11 and 25

9:45 AM

**Future Bible Study
Opportunities will be
announced soon**

Scout Pancake Supper

First Lutheran Church is the charter organization for two scouting units. Pack 3705 and Troop 4705. Both units serve families in Monmouth and the surrounding areas.



On Tuesday, February 17th, from 5 PM to 6:30 PM the Troop will host a pancake supper fundraiser. The funds raised will support scouts attending summer camp. Summer camp can cost up to \$425 to attend for a week. So all fundraising really does help the scouts offset that cost.

Sunday School

Our Sunday school days will be the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month.

Our Next three Sundays are: February 8 and February 22, March 8.

We will begin at 9:45. Sunday school students will join worship in time to share communion with their families.

The Season of Lent

Ash Wednesday Worship is Wednesday, February 18th at 7PM in our Chapel. Join us for the start of Lent with the Imposition of Ashes and Holy Communion. This night recognizes our mortality and sinful nature, and the hope we find in the resurrection of Jesus.

Congregation Forum—February 22nd

Join us on Sunday, February 22nd for a congregation feedback forum. The Pathways Discernment Team and the congregation council have wrestled with and prayed over a list of core value identity markers and whittled the list down and crafted 5 brief core value statements:

- We gather because of our faith in Jesus
- We welcome all
- We engage in open, honest, respectful conversation for faith growth
- Everyone has something to contribute
- We create a safe haven, reflecting the hope of God's Kingdom

Before declaring these as official core values, the Pathways Discernment Team and the congregation council invite you to reflect on these statements and share feedback about how these statements do or do not reflect your view of First Lutheran Church.

Sunday, February 22nd, following the worship service, we will gather in the sanctuary. Our conversation will talk about what a core value is, why a congregation often has core values that are implicit and why we are trying to make them explicit, and do these statements fully reflect who we are as a congregation.

Feedback during this forum will be used to help craft the most accurate core value statements for our congregation that will be useful in not only planning current ministries, but will be helpful in future decisions the Pathways Discernment Team helps the congregation and the congregation council take as we discover more about where God is leading us.

Mid-Week Lent Re-Center Devotions — Join us on the Wednesdays of Lent as we take a break from the busy-ness and overwhelming feelings of our daily life. There is so much pressure on us right now, so much political weight hanging on us, so much cultural divide. We need a moment to just gather and collectively take a deep breath.

Each Wednesday in the season of Lent (Feb 25, Mar 4, 11, 18, and 25) we will meet at 7 PM in the Chapel for a meditative devotion time. We will follow a series of devotions on the themes of Dread, Christ Alone, Grace Alone, Faith Alone, and Life in the Word. These themes will have reflections written by Martin Luther. We will have centering songs, times of silent prayer, and devotional reflection.

Holy Week begins with Palm Sunday, March 29th with our 10 AM worship that will include the procession of palms and the reading of the passion.

Maundy Thursday is April 2nd. We will worship at 7 PM in our Chapel.

Good Friday is April 3rd. We will again worship at 7 PM in our Chapel.

These special days are opportunities to gather and hear the central story of our faith—that Jesus died and we have forgiveness forever more because God's love is more powerful than even death.



Epiphany

January 6 to February 15

When you come to worship, you will notice a set of banners on the two sides of the front of the sanctuary. And you will see a series of cloths, called paraments, that adorn the altar, lectern, and pulpit. These will all match in color scheme and may even have similar symbols on them.

Let's break down the colors: We have white banners that come out for very certain days. Christmas and the Sundays of Christmas, the Baptism of the Lord, the Transfiguration of our Lord, Easter and the 7 week season of Easter, Holy Trinity Sunday, and Christ the King Sunday.

So you might notice a pattern here. White paraments align with the days that have something to do with Jesus: his birth, his resurrection, his glory. White has long been associate with Christ' glory and the radiance of God seen in Christ.

The color white is actually all colors wrapped into one, where as black is the absence of all color. So, when we see the white paraments we are not only seeing white, we are seeing the full spectrum of colors and we are reminded that God is fully present in all things.

Northern Illinois Synod

Congregation Resourcing Event

Each year our synod hosts a big learning event for all members of the synod. This is an opportunity to gather with Lutherans from across northern Illinois and learn more about the ministries of our church.

CRE is held at Sauk Valley Community College in Dixon, IL on Saturday, March 7th. Registration opens at 8:30 AM with the opening worship beginning at 9:30 PM. With a keynote speaker and workshop opportunities, the event goes until 3:45 PM. Lunch is included with the \$40 registration fee.

For more information or to sign up, contact Pastor Jamie

Worship Guild Members

February 15—Transfiguration Sunday

Usher:	Steve Erlandson
Reader:	Judy Sanberg
Com Asst:	Doug Cruce
Narthex Host:	Linda McGuire
Musician:	Carolyn Kellert

February 18—Ash Wednesday—Chapel Worship

Usher:	David Sandstrom
Reader:	Ellen Shrader
Com Asst:	Mark Shrader
Narthex Host:	Linda McGuire
Musician:	Janice Algren

February 22—1st Sunday in Lent

Usher:	Chip Algren
Reader:	Maddie Blaesing
Com Asst:	David Sandstrom
Narthex Host:	Linda McGuire
Musician:	Janice Algren

March 1—2nd Sunday in Lent

Usher:	Dee Dee Yez
Reader:	Kurt Volz
Com Asst:	Chip Algren
Narthex Host:	Linda McGuire
Musician:	Janice Algren





Every Sunday

9:30 AM Fellowship Gathering
10:00 AM Worship

Sun, February 8th—4th Sunday after Epiphany

Sun, Feb 8th— Scout Sunday

9:45 AM Family Sunday School

Tues, Feb 10th—6 PM Council meeting

Wed, Feb 11 through Saturday, Feb 14—Pastor Jamie will be out of the office

Sun, February 15th—Transfiguration of the Lord

Tue, Feb 17th— 5 PM to 6:30 PM Scout Troop 4705 Pancake Supper

Wed, Feb 18th—7 PM Ash Wednesday Worship
In the Chapel

Sunday, February 22nd—1st Sunday in Lent

Sun, Feb 22—11:00 AM, Congregation Core Values and Vision Forum

Wed, Feb 25—7:00 PM Lent Devotion—Chapel

Sunday, March 1st—2nd Sunday in Lent

Mon, Mar 2—7:00 PM Building/Grounds

Wed, Mar 4—7:00 PM Lent Devotion—Chapel

Sat, Mar 7—MRHS uses sanctuary for Solo/
Ensemble contest

From February 2nd through March 6th, MRHS music department students will be using our facility during school days for solo/ensemble practice. Please check with the church office before using church space during the weekdays during this period.

Notice something missing from the calendar? Please contact the church office, and we will add it to next week's newsletter.



Feb 15 Ross Beedle
Feb 17 Kierstyn Johnson
Feb 17 Gary Martin
Feb 18 Mary Jane Olson
Feb 19 Janet Lowe
Feb 26 Teresa Miller
Feb 27 Heidi Niemann
Feb 28 Connie Larimer
Mar 2 Dana Jensen
Mar 7 Dawn Johnson
Mar 7 Pam Van Kirk
Mar 9 Helen Babcock
Mar 13 Joey Slater
Mar 20 Dee Dee Yez
Mar 25 Heather Ide
Mar 27 Phil Bergren
Mar 27 Kurt Volz
Mar 30 Anna Lovdahl
Apr 4 Marlys Dobry
Apr 5 Deb Manuel
Apr 6 April Icenogle
Apr 7 Fred Burgland
Apr 10 Trace Gallagher
Apr 11 Angela Bradley-Volz
Apr 13 Elise Blaesing



Feb 22 Kenny & Nancy Reynolds
Mar 1 Phil & Trudy Bergren
Mar 11 Cecil & Kay Lovdahl
Mar 14 Jim & Tammy Slater
Apr 2 Don & Kathy Fillman
Apr 25 Todd & Kris Champion
Apr 28 Ron & Deb Manuel
May 5 Craig & Brenda Jones
May 6 Chuck & Connie Larimer
May 21 Ted & Sue Hanson
Jun 4 Gary & Judy Sanberg
Jun 7 Angela & Kathleen Bradley Volz
Jun 7 Dennis & Becky Terpening
Jun 8 Ben & Jenny Sanberg
Jun 12 Neal & Jackie Heerwagen
Jun 13 Michael & Barb Pearson
Jun 14 Doug & Kathi Cruce
Jun 14 Rich & Nancy Hanson
Jun 15 Rob & Tammy Ravel
June 19 Stan & Diane Carlson
Jun 23 Mike & Susie Jurgens
Jun 23 John & Pam VanKirk

Prayer Requests

Ila Roseberry, Kathi Cruce, Dean Sandstrom, Janet Lowe, Wes Lovdahl, Pat Clark, Jennie Best

Please let the church office know any updates that are needed to our prayer list.



Vision and Purpose Giving

In February, our Vision and Purpose Giving will support Lutheran Disaster Response.

Lutheran Disaster Response shares God's hope, healing and renewal with people whose lives have been disrupted by disasters in the United States and around the world. When the dust settles and the headlines change, we stay to provide ongoing assistance to those in need.

January, Mosaic

February, Lutheran Disaster Response

March, ELCA World Hunger

April, Special Olympics

May, Recharge Center

June, St. Jude Run (Wendy Anderson)

July, LWR School Kits

August, Kiwanis Club

September, Out of Darkness Walk

October, Strom Center

November, Lutheran Day Care and Pre-School

December, Jamieson Center



Is this not the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? It is not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? — Isaiah 58:6-7

Every now and then there is a passage of scripture that is very condemning of our modern world. Written centuries before Jesus was born, Isaiah speaks to an unfaithful nation of Israel whose kings had turned the nation away from being a beacon of God's light in the world and towards a place of harsh slavery and rough conditions that favored the wealthy and made the poor even more poor. Imagine, the world thousands of years ago when the hungry were getting no assistance, the poor were feeling the economic pinch, and outsiders were made to feel horrible for not being part of the insiders. Maybe not so tough to imagine, this describes our modern day nation, too.

The ancient prophet still speaks to contemporary issues. And we have to decide if we will listen — and not just listen but act on what the ancient prophet speaks. The reward for heeding these words is spoken by the same ancient prophet "Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard." (Isaiah 58:8)

When we protest actions of a weaponized anti-immigrant force that is unjustly targeting people, when we cry out when societal safety net programs like SNAP is cut, when we challenge mass incarcerations that do nothing more than increase the rate of return incarceration, when we demand greater wage equality and fairness, when we petition for fairer economic conditions — these are not just talking points from one side of our modern political system. These are biblical imperatives that speak not only to our own time, but to generations. And the reality is our world has never come close to realizing the fullness of God's Kingdom, as evidenced by a 2500 year old prophetic declaration still ringing true today. That doesn't mean we give up and say oh well, this is the way it is. We are not called to just let the government go any which way it wants to. The ancient prophet's words were a call to continual action. Every time the government strays from accomplishing the goals of a right and just society, we are called to action, to name what is happening and to proclaim Good News, that the world can change and align more with God's Kingdom. May the prophet's word ring every more true in us today as we lift up our voice and sing our rallying cry—that God's Kingdom calls forth justice for all.

Peace, Pastor Jamie